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Yes, Professor Sihler is right. What is needed in this country is a college whose curriculum is intended to fit its students to become useful members of society, to appreciate the heritage to which they were born, to give freer rein to that part which distinguishes them from the beasts that perish. It is almost needless to say further that in such a college the place of the humanities must always be a large one. Material success has of necessity been the goal of this country in the past but the country has tasted to the full the triumphs of material success. It must now return to the more sober, and, for that reason, more satisfactory life of the spirit.

G. L.

THE GREEK IN ENGLISH¹

. . . I wish to raise and discuss one narrow question—a question which, by the way, was put to me a few weeks ago by a girl who was about to finish her high-school course. She came to me one day and said: “I wish to prepare myself to be a teacher of English. Should I learn Greek?”

The query carried me back a dozen years to a day when I myself, then fresh from college, stood in the presence of the superintendent of a great system of city schools. “So”, he said to me, “you want a job. What do you wish to teach?” “English”, I said. “English”, he repeated. “Don’t you know that anybody can teach English? Can’t you teach anything else?” His words, and still more his manner, nettled me, and I replied, somewhat testily, I fear: “I can teach Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, Spanish, history, and mathematics. I would add science, sir, except that I do not like to be bothered with a laboratory”. He laughed and gave me a job. So, when the young woman asked me, “Should I learn Greek?” I talked to her as I should have liked to talk to that superintendent, putting into my discourse the pent-up enthusiasm of a dozen years of self-renunciation and ever-growing conviction. It is my purpose today to say to you, somewhat carefully and fully, what I then said with unpremeditated zeal to her.

The question, as I conceive it, is one which involves the whole problem of English teaching. This, broadly speaking, embraces practically all aspects of the intercommunication of thought by means of the vernacular. It deals with the pupil’s ability to understand other people’s thoughts and his ability to make them understand his own, together with all of the deep and high questions which a liberal interpretation of these words will warrant. It in-

cludes the reading of books, studies in grammar and rhetoric, the writing of compositions, practice in all kinds of speaking. In order to teach these things aright, one must conceive of them, not as separate and independent phenomena, but as four sides, so to speak, of one and the same thing. Before this essential unity can be understood, the entire series of causes which have made the English language and English literature what we find them must be grasped and mastered. In other words, it behooves the teacher of English, as it behooves the teacher of physiography, to know something about springs as well as something about rivers.

We find, then, that in some vague prehistoric age there began to flow from the same Indo-European fount two linguistic streams. One of these took its course westward along the southern shores of Europe and became in time the speech, not only of Greece and Rome, but also of Italy, France, the Iberian peninsula, and, for a while, the British Isles. One branch of this stream, the Greek, became the highway of the most splendid and opulent literary commerce that the world knew until, two thousand years later, that proud pre-eminence was transferred from Attica to Albion.

The second and younger of these language rivers flowed in a northwesterly direction through the Teutonic forests and along the shores of the German ocean until, having made a peninsula of the continent of Europe, the two branches, meeting once more in Britain, converted that peninsula into an island, thereby furnishing to the imagination a picture strikingly suggestive of the all-embracing character of the speech and the literature which this reunion was to produce. At first, however, like Balin and Balan in the story, if you will pardon a variation of the figure, these linguistic brothers knew each other not. Then, for a thousand years, ensued a struggle—the most interesting, I am inclined to think, in history—of tongues and of ideals. Out of this war emerged a new language; a language to which Asia and Europe, Germany and Greece, north, south, east, and west, the sun and the cloud, the mountain and the plain, the desert and the sea, alike contributed of their wealth; a language alien to no race and equally adapted to the needs of commerce, science, ethics, art, and theology. Is it too much to ask that those who propose to make their vocation the teaching of this language inform themselves as far as they can concerning the elements which have made it what it is?

Of those elements none, except the Saxon and the Latin, are linguistically more important than the Greek and, in proportion as our range of speculation and discovery widens, the relative weight of this Greek contingent increases. Indeed, it is not too much to assert that, in these days of scientific progress, when each hour witnesses the invention of some new comfort or the discovery of some new

¹ This paper was read at a meeting of the Michigan Schoolmasters Club, at Ann Arbor, April 1, 1905, and was published in *The School Review* 14, 390-397. I have long cherished it among my treasures. It seems to me well worth reprinting, nearly in full, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*. The teacher of Latin should have no difficulty in making application of Mr. Miller’s line of thought to his own case and in thereby seeing the importance of Greek to him.

C. K.

planet, it witnesses likewise the addition to our language of some new word of Attic pedigree.

In Greek syntax as well as in Greek etymology there is likewise much illumination that is not without significance to the teacher of English. To cite one instance, I will call your attention to the conditional sentence as it exists in Greek. There, and there alone, is it possible to learn fully what a subtle and flexible instrument it may become in the hands of a thinker.

After all, however, these are minor considerations. The decisive argument for Greek lies in the influence which its literature has exerted upon ours. The Renaissance found England practically without a literature of its own, and yet charged with all those elements of national life which inevitably produce one. The situation, together with the fact, already noted, that the genius of English is by no means alien to the genius of Greek, brought forth a series of masterpieces the ultimate roots of which go back to Attica, sometimes in thin and rare tendrils, but sometimes, too, in fibers so vast as to be obvious to the least attentive eye. From Spenser to Browning, indeed, there has been hardly an English writer of note whose manner, whose matter, and whose spirit do not in greater or less measure reflect what Macaulay calls the immortal influence of Athens. The question is, then: Can one rightly interpret our English masters who does not know at first-hand the sources of their inspiration?

There are, indeed, those who reject the obvious reply. These plead ingeniously for what they disingenuously call our indigenous literature, as if there were in that term some subtle virtue which takes the reason prisoner. Apparently they would have us forget that Saxon is no more indigenous to England than potatoes to Ireland. They desire, at any rate, to deprive us of Addison and Burke and Macaulay; they would take away Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Tennyson, and Browning; they would leave us, in short, little except Beowulf, Burns, and Rudyard Kipling. If applied to theological literature, their argument would deprive us likewise of the Hebrew Scriptures and reduce our body of divinity, if I see aright, to Bob Ingersoll's lectures and Tom Paine's Age of Reason. Against the insular prejudice of this view, which is objectionable equally on linguistic, historical, aesthetic, and moral grounds, I desire vigorously to protest. I wish to go on record as upholding the possibly antiquated view, that, after all, Paradise Lost and Lycidas may be as justly entitled to be considered English classics as "Gunga Dhin" and "Mandalay".

Of our literature how much, you ask, is really Greek? To answer this question adequately is far beyond my powers; yet I must endeavor in some slight measure to perform the task.

I will ask you to think of Troilus and Cressida,

of the Faerie Queene, of Paradise Lost, of the Dunciad, of the Idylls of the King. Is it possible to understand their technique and their spirit, in whole or in part, without a knowledge of the Iliad? From the invocation to the Muse in Paradise Lost down to the last line of the Passing of Arthur, the English epic presents countless reminiscences, some broad and obvious, some subtle and evanescent, of the Homeric poems. Take the Shakespearean line, "The multitudinous seas incarnadine", or the Miltonic line, "To bellow through the vast and boundless deep". The bigness of the suggestions which they arouse waxes more majestic when at their call there emerges from the cavernous abysses of memory their elder brother, or as some say, their parent, the Homeric, βῆ δ' ἄκτων παρὰ θίνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης. What sidelights does not the Odyssey throw on the Lotos Eaters; in what prismatic rainbow hues of association does it not enwreath Comus; what an apperception mass it creates for the understanding of Ulysses! Do you think that the latter would have won the pension for Alfred if Sir Robert had had small Latin and less Greek? The fundamental fact about the Lays of Ancient Rome—we have it on Macaulay's own authority—can be found only in the Iliad. Nay, often the simplest modern humor is a sealed book to those who know not Agamemnon and Briseis. What open sesame but a first-hand knowledge of the Iliad is there to the Autocrat's magic incantation, "Πόδας ὀκνὸς Ἀχιλλεύς, Homer's ferocious old boy"? Herbart, who bids fair, with just reason, to become the *vade mecum* of the twentieth-century pedagogue, took the Odyssey as the core of his educational system; and to the esteem which, for similar purposes, it is held in France, the popularity of Fénelon's *Télémaque* bears eloquent and enduring testimony. Indeed, Kipling himself, in that delicate confessional, "When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre", acknowledges frankly his debt to the Greeks, to the confusion of his would-be exalters. Why not? Are not he and Homer brothers in their love of the "infinite hoar brine" and their understanding of the "mad White Horses"? Even Beowulf insistently challenges comparison with Homer.

Likewise we find in Theocritus the best of all standards by which to measure the pastorals of Burns. He hints at it himself. And who knows Lycidas, the high-water mark of English poetry, that knows not the Sicilian idyl? Passing by the make-believe pastorals of the lisping Pope, I hasten to inquire further if the teacher of Adonais and of Oenone can afford not to draw inspiration from that pellucid fountain which had its source in Arcadia and its renaissance first in Syracuse and afterward in Shelley and in Tennyson?

Of the Greek ode and its influence on Dryden, Pope, Collins, Gray, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and

Lowell there is no time to speak. Likewise opportunity is lacking for adequate expression of the value of the Greek drama in estimating, not only the confessedly classic plays of Milton and Swinburne, but the very heart and soul of the distinctively English theater.

It will be said, perhaps, that translations will do the business. The Greekless Keats had the Greek spirit in its perfection. Emerson found it irksome to read even modern books in the original, when good versions were available; yet we call him the Yankee Plato. Pope translated Homer without knowing Greek at all.

The exception tests the rule. Who has duplicated Keats's achievement? How many of us are Keatses? The lack of the Greek sense of symmetry is precisely the point for which Emerson has been most justly and persistently assailed by literary critics. And, if what Pope really did was not to take Homer out of Greek, but to turn Chapman's rugged Alexandrines into flowing Augustan pentameters, what a marvelous loss it has been to English letters! If he had only known Greek as Bentley knew it, there would be less talk about his diamonds being paste, and the world would have been spared several later versions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

From this multiplicity of versions arises, indeed, one of the most potent of reasons for knowing Homer at first-hand. We must choose between Chapman, Pope, Cowper, Bryant, Palmer, Howland, and Andrew Lang. Keats preferred Chapman. Bentley, though he acknowledged that Pope had made a pretty poem, declared it was not Homer; Carlyle, on the other hand, as late as 1871, called Pope's the best English version; an opinion shared, I believe, by De Quincey, Augustine Birrell, and several others, including the committee on college-entrance requirements in English. Nobody reads Cowper, so nobody is qualified to pass judgment on him. Patriotic Americans vote for Bryant, and Harvard men feel constrained to put in a word for Palmer; while in Chicago, unless you know Greek, there is no escape from Howland. Austin Dobson, as is natural, confesses cautiously that, if he is to learn in prose how Homer sang, he likes him best in Butcher and in Lang, which sounds pretty and hurts nobody. And then, to cap the climax, Matthew Arnold writes a glorious essay on how not to translate Homer, proving all false that has been written hitherto and putting us to ignorance again, but establishing beyond the peradventure of a doubt the point we set out to prove, namely, that the only way to decide which is the right translation is to learn Greek and read the original.

In spite of all this, it is a fact that Homer has been better translated than any other Greek poet. Except in fragments, Pindar, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides do not in any high and satisfactory

sense exist for us in English. Frere's Aristophanes is, indeed, a tart one and a merry; and Andrew Lang has made a delightful prose version of Theocritus; but, in general, the instruments do not exist for penetrating to the heart of Greek literature without a knowledge of the Greek language.

Can the student afford the time to gain this knowledge? The specialist in English assuredly can. Considering the interests involved the investment will not be heavy. The department of Greek in the university by offering to beginners a course the object of which is to make facile readers rather than exact scholars, has made it easy for the student, at the end of two years, to have his Xenophon, his Homer, and his tragedies in pretty good shape.

If a practical suggestion as to the ways and means of stimulating interest in Greek be admissible, I am tempted to express a desire to see the university undertake a somewhat frequent production of Greek plays. Some who have worn the cothurnus assure me that that experience produced in them a love and an understanding of the language which they would not willingly be without.

It is my wish to leave you in an amiable frame of mind. I believe that, in spite of all I have said, I am in real accord with the magnificent progress which education is making among us along new lines. I am a friend to household arts and manual training. I look with approval on stenography, book-keeping, commercial geography, laboratory science, and applied athletics. And I believe that, in what I have said, there is nothing to which the advocates of these subjects may not heartily and consistently subscribe. I heartily agree that, for the general reader of English literature, Greek is a luxury. The point that I wish to make is that, for the specialist in literature, it is a necessity; and I trust that you will believe with me that, if the time ever comes when its spirit and its ideals cease to be preserved among us by a large and eager band of scholars, the loss that will ensue can be regarded as nothing less than a national calamity.

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E. L. MILLER.

REVIEW

Roman Cities in Italy and Dalmatia. By A. L. Frothingham. New York: Sturgis and Walton Co. (1910). Pp. xi + 343 (with 61 plates). \$1.75.

This book, though popular and unscholastic, is written with a definite purpose. The author, needless to say, is quite at home in the rôle of cicerone, and conducts the reader entertainingly through many interesting places, often far from the beaten track. But the whole tour is so planned that the net result is a goodly store of material for the reconstruction of Rome itself, as it was during the later Republic and under Augustus. One soon discovers that a projected *magnum opus* is here sketched